



# THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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June 8, 2004

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**Executive Director:**  
TOM COCHRAN

The Honorable James Walsh  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on VA-HUD  
Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Christopher Bond  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on VA-HUD  
Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen:

We, the undersigned Mayors, are committed to ending chronic homelessness in our cities, and we are seeking your leadership to help us realize this critical goal.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors recently endorsed a resolution partnering with the Administration to end chronic homelessness in ten years and setting a goal of developing 100 local ten-year plans to do so by the end of 2004. So far 92 mayors have committed to create 10 year plans.

We urge that funding be provided for the Administration's FY 2005 \$70 million multi-agency budget proposal for the **Samaritan Initiative**. The initiative would create funding streams in 3 key departments - \$50 million in HUD, \$10 million in VA, and \$10 million in HHS - and then combine these funds to provide permanent housing and supportive services. The **Samaritan Initiative** is targeted to those most likely to be on our streets, disabled, and long term homeless. The intent is to fund results oriented initiatives to create visible and measurable change on our streets and in the lives of homeless people.

To increase the impact of this initiative to help our communities end chronic homelessness, there needs to be an increased investment in HHS-funded supportive services. We are requesting that at least \$45 million be included in SAMHSA's Projects of Regional and National Significance for the Ending Long Term Homelessness Service Initiative, which will add to the on-site supportive services of the **Samaritan Initiative** necessary to make permanent housing for the chronically homeless work. Without these services to mitigate health, substance abuse, and mental health problems of persons experiencing chronic homelessness, housing stability is threatened.

The financial return on this combined \$115 million investment is enormous.

Research over the last decade has demonstrated that supportive housing models to end chronic homelessness are highly effective, with 80-90% sustainability rates for tenancies in supportive housing. Moreover, the research has shown that the cost of providing supportive housing is substantially offset by savings in the most expensive systems of community care including hospitalizations, jails, and other correctional facilities. And most importantly, these supportive strategies improve the quality of life for both the individuals being housed and the community at large. The President's New Freedom Commission and the bipartisan Millennial Housing Commission have both echoed these findings.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this important request. With your help, we can move from managing chronic homelessness to finally and decisively ending it.

Sincerely,

(See attached list)

Gavin Newson, San Francisco, California	Kathy Koelker-Wheeler, Renton, Washington
Scott L. King, Gary, Indiana	Dannel P. Malloy, Stamford, Connecticut
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Tommy Bragg, Murfreesboro, Tennessee	John P. Purcell, Jr., Lawton, Oklahoma
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John M. Fabrizi, Bridgeport, Connecticut	Victor J. Santiago Diaz, Municipality of Toa Maja, Puerto Rico